

Zoran Milutinović

## Serbian Anglophiles in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

What were the main features of British society and culture which attracted the attention of Serbian intellectuals in the first half of the twentieth century?<sup>1</sup> Although Serbian anglophiles were not numerous – as at the time most Serbs who went to study abroad attended French universities, and for linguistic, personal and cultural reasons, remained attached to the country of their education – some of the most influential authors in Serbian culture in this period demonstrated a strong attachment to British culture and believed that emulating it would be beneficial for their own society. Unsurprisingly, their insights did not result from an analytical approach and can hardly be taken as an objective academic assessment of a foreign culture and society. The images societies and cultures produce of one another are rarely, if ever, objective, analytical or disinterested: rather, they tend to focus on what their producers perceive as lacking in their own society. For French thinkers during the Enlightenment, China was a promised land of rationalism and freedom from religious dogmatism, although historians of East Asia would hesitate to confirm that Chinese rationalism in the eighteenth century was exactly what Voltaire wanted to see in France. Victorian travellers in the Middle East perceived ‘exuberant sexuality’ wherever they went; although sexual *moeurs* in that region have not changed much since then, our contemporary publicists with an ambition to explain Middle Eastern societies prefer to speak of ‘sexual repression’. (Amin, 1989, 95) What has changed is not the understanding of sexuality in the Middle East, but in the West. Serbian intellectuals in the first half of the twentieth century were no more analytical than these Victorian travellers or our contemporary publicists: observing British society, they had in mind their compatriots, their own society and its needs. The creation of images of other societies and cultures always has as its primary aim the understanding of our own society and culture: these images of the other tell us how we perceive ourselves.

It must not be forgotten that the master discourse for understanding other societies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century – the period during which sociology was making its first hesitant steps, and was still very far from an established academic discipline such as it is in our time – was *Völkerpsychologie*. It was based on empirical knowledge that cultures, customs, values, manners and ‘ways of doing things’ differ from one society to another, and following the analogy with individual human beings it ascribed the causes of these differences to psychological characteristics or mentalities of whole nations. *Völkerpsychologie* had its practitioners in Serbia as well – for example, one such observer of national psychological types was Vladimir Dvorniković (1888-1956) – who mostly repeated the stereotypes about various nations already available in the huge body of *Völkerpsychologie* literature created throughout the nineteenth century in major European languages. Perhaps the most influential was Jovan Cvijić (1865-1927), a geographer with a significant international academic reputation. Cvijić was not a typical practitioner of *Völkerpsychologie*, yet his version

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter summarizes some theses from chapters three and four of my book *Getting over Europe* (2011), where the reader will be able to find similar ideas discussed in greater detail.

of *anthropo-geography* had certain similarities to it. Working at the borders of ethnography, anthropology and geography, Cvijić tried to define specific psychological types prevalent in Yugoslavia. Cvijić did not try to describe ethnic or national mentalities, but based his analysis on geographic regions which conditioned certain forms of economic and social organization: for example, the best known psychological type from his catalogue, the Dinaric one, acquired its name from the Dinara mountain and included Serbs, Montenegrins, Croats, Albanians and Bosniaks/Bosnian Muslims. The Dinaric psychological type was characterized by a highly developed intelligence and strong imagination, a sense of justice and patriarchal morality, honour, courage and pride, but also by impulsiveness and oversensitivity, and by spontaneous, strong reactions which could often be violent. We do not know which method Cvijić used when assembling the characteristics of his psychological types: the Dinaric type corresponded very closely with the characteristics traditionally ascribed to heroes of epic poetry, not only that of the South Slavs, which was still very much alive in Cvijić's time in this region, but also to Greek heroes from *The Iliad*. One could speculate about Cvijić's sources and methods, and try to guess whether he simply projected the character of the epic hero on the people living in the Dinaric region, and thus romanticized the population of the most underdeveloped part of Yugoslavia, or whether he observed the persistence of a psychological and cultural type created by a largely patriarchal culture – Greek as well as South Slav – or whether his informants really did behave according to the pattern they had learnt from the dominant form of their culture: namely, from oral epic poetry. Be it as it may, Cvijić's description of the Dinaric psychological type was met with diametrically opposed reactions: some glorified it for its courage, pride, heroism, sense of justice and intelligence, implying that it was not only one of the psychological types that could be found in Yugoslavia, but the very type of *our man*; some, however, opposed this proud glorification by emphasising its impulsiveness and strong reactions which could result in violence. These different reactions fed an understated discussion in Serbian culture between the world wars, which still has not received proper scholarly attention: namely, the discussion about *manners*.

It is quite understandable why cultural history has not yet addressed this topic: it is not the most obvious theme of cultural history, and somehow falls into the cracks between other, more prominent topics. Social and economic modernization, for example, or rapid urbanization, or the presence of avant-garde and modernist art and literature, on a par with those produced in other European cultures, which sprang up in a country with a high level of illiteracy and generally low level of education, are all well-researched topics. However, exactly this disharmony, already noted in cultural history, in which different sections of social, cultural and economic life moved in non-conformity and discord with each other, created a problem: economic modernization and rapid urbanization brought from the countryside to the cities patriarchal, often illiterate people, whose cultural framework was informed by the patterns of behaviour characteristic of Cvijić's Dinaric type: courageous, proud, just and honourable, yet overly sensitive, impulsive and prone to spontaneous overreactions which could easily turn to violence. They found themselves among urban dwellers, who often acquired their education at European universities, many of whom originated from the geographical regions where the Dinaric type was not to be found, for whom patriarchal morality was only an interesting intellectual topic, instead of a pattern to be emulated, and who admired Achilles for his honour, pride and spontaneous heroism – but only in Homer's verses, not in everyday life. There were many ways to account for this clash. One of them was

to address what was most obvious: the behavioural patterns in everyday life, known as manners.

The first to tackle this topic was Bogdan Popović (1863 – 1944), a professor of comparative literature at the University of Belgrade and the founding editor of *Srpski književni glasnik* (Serbian Literary Herald). Like many of his peers, he was educated in France, travelled widely and spoke several languages, including English. This may have been the reason for his stay in London during the First World War and a few years afterwards, where he was sent by the government and attached to the Serbian Legation in a semi-official capacity. His duties were light: he was to oversee Serbian students at British universities as their personal tutor. On one occasion he was called to Oxford, where a large contingent of Serbian students attended the university, in order to talk them into ‘calmer and more or less decent behaviour’ (Popović 1932: 254).<sup>2</sup> We do not know what kinds of problems prompted this call, but judging by the topic of the lecture that Popović delivered to them on this occasion, it must have been something connected with at least some of the characteristics of Cvijić’s Dinaric type. He spoke about mentality and culture, and urged them to learn from the English “the way of governing one’s life and one’s mind” (ibid., 247). Popović reminded the students of Cvijić’s description of the Dinaric psychological type, and diplomatically acknowledged that its alleged great sensibility had given rise to many other positive features – such as a high level of intelligence, compassion, and a strong imagination – but that it also possessed a number of less admirable features: an overly excitable temperament, irritability and impulsiveness, overly passionate desires and excessive anger if these were unfulfilled, and generally insufficient control of one’s feelings and speech. Cvijić understood this psychological type as a result of cultural developments ultimately caused by geography – Dinaric men were highlanders, who lived in isolated small village communities in a sparsely populated region, and fiercely defended their independence from any authority or government – but Bogdan Popović generalized his description and applied it to all Serbs. Moreover, he modified Cvijić’s understanding of the circumstances which caused its development: instead of geography, Popović pointed to history. Serbs were a ‘young race’, which for four centuries had lived without any intellectual and social life, without a state of its own, and without aristocracy, liberal professions or well-to-do people. (ibid., 249) They had failed to develop psychological and cultural mechanisms for neutralising these negative features of the Dinaric type, which Popović sums up in a brief formula: ‘there is no control of our feelings’. (ibid., 248) From this diagnosis, one can deduce the nature of the students’ mischief which had led him to travel to Oxford: ‘fits of acute irritation and strong anger, or mistakes of unrestrained and sharp language, which one finds so often among people who have been poorly brought up’. (ibid., 257)

This was exactly what he wanted the students to learn from the English: Popović saw the English as a people who had developed the art of controlling one’s feelings to the highest degree possible, an art manifested in everyday life as ‘thoughtfulness, consideration for others’ (ibid., 257), or simply as kindness. To be sure, in his view the English also possessed a number of other civic virtues, such as courage, a love of freedom, patriotism, calm in the face

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<sup>2</sup> The main part of Popović’s article “Šta Srbi imaju da nauče od Engleza” (What Serbs can learn from the English) is the Oxford lecture given to Serbian students, and originally published in the London-based Serbian journal *Misao* in 1(1918-19), 10-18; 2(1918-19)46-53; and 3(1918-19), 78-85.

of danger (ibid., 258), but Popović did not emphasise those, as he probably believed that the Dinaric type, or the 'young' Serbian 'race', already possessed them. After all, it would be hard to imagine a Serb who would claim, after the period of wars between 1912 and 1918, that his nation still had to learn to love freedom and be patriotic. However, a softer virtue, not very useful in wars for national liberation, but crucial in times of peace, was obviously lacking, and in this regard Popović pointed to the host country: 'The British are good by nature, if one can say such a thing, and they feel a natural and genuine need to be kind and polite'. (ibid., 262) Their goodness and politeness were the 'product of long experience and gradual development' (ibid., 259), and had eventually become their second nature.

The idea that politeness and control of one's feelings were related to the forms of social life, state organization, the presence of aristocracy, liberal professions and well-to-do people, became the backbone of Norbert Elias' *The Civilizing Process* (1939), some twenty years later. Instead of continuing the *Völkerpsychologie* approach and discussing the inborn national psychological characteristics, Elias pointed to the ever-increasing complexity of modern social life, in which, due to the differentiation of social roles and the interdependency of individuals living in enclosed, densely populated urban settings, one's success and survival depended on one's ability to control one's feelings and their expressions: 'The chief danger that people here represent for others results from someone in this bustle losing their self-control', claimed Elias (2000: 368). Instead of being an inborn characteristic of a national mentality, the affective structures of the English and, for example, the Italians, their ability to control their feelings and expressions thereof, differed because they developed within historically different levels of interconnectedness. But everywhere the general direction of the development of affective structures has led towards increased self-control, suppression of short-term impulses and the formation of a more complex and stronger 'super-ego' agency (ibid., 380), or, to put it differently, away from the Dinaric psychological type. For Elias this was a deep psychological process, which affected the human psychological structure worldwide, but on the surface this control of one's feelings and rational management of one's behaviour could be described as politeness, etiquette, and manners, including polite forms of speech. Suppressing short-term impulses and hasty reactions, and prioritizing long-term goals – best served by minimizing the friction with other members of the same community, with whom one lived in an interconnected manner and in close proximity, and noticeable as politeness and good manners – was what Elias saw as the civilizing process, and it originated from European royal courts, spreading first to the wider circle of aristocracy, then to the bourgeois strata and upper classes, eventually transforming the rising lower classes of Western society in the nineteenth century (ibid., 428). However, Elias also noted that this diffusion process depended on certain preconditions, such as relative security and prosperity: those 'living permanently in danger of starving to death or of being killed by enemies can hardly develop or maintain those stable restraints characteristic of the more civilized types of conduct. To instil and maintain a more stable super-ego agency, a relatively high standard of living and a fairly high degree of security are necessary' (ibid., 428-29). If there is neither one nor another, if the social structure is not stratified – the court, aristocracy, liberal professions, and bourgeoisie – how is *civilité* to take root and thrive? This is exactly what Popović pointed out: there was neither intellectual nor social life, neither a state nor a court, no aristocracy, liberal professions and well-to-do people for four centuries in Serbia, and instead of being transformed by the gradual development leading to increased self-control, suppression of short-term impulses and formation of a more complex and stronger 'super-ego' agency, the

Dinaric psychological type remained frozen in the simple, pre-modern past. In such circumstances, one cannot wait for the natural development of this historical process, however inevitable it might be, but one must look for a faster route: this is the meaning of Popović's lecture title 'What Serbs can learn from the English'. In the absence of the native class, from which *civilité* can spread out in concentric circles, the sons of Serbian peasants and craftsmen studying in Oxford had to be directed to wholly different people with all its classes, which had already learnt to restrain their feelings and adjust to the complexities of modern life. Here, again, Popović expressed what Elias would write twenty years later: 'From Western society – as a kind of upper class – Western "civilized" patterns of conduct are today spreading over wide areas outside the West, whether through settlement of Occidentals or through the assimilation of the upper strata of other nations' (ibid., 384), and so 'the Western nations as a whole have an upper-class function' (ibid., 385).

Popović repeated the same message in his essay 'Obuzdavajte osećanja!' (Restrain your feelings!) which he had published in 1925 in Sarajevo, the geographical centre of the purest Dinaric psychological type. Unrestrained feelings lead to violence. The Dinaric type is 'the violent type', and behaves violently

whenever he believes it safe to do so; but when he encounters resistance, which announces imminent punishment, he not only ceases being violent, but becomes gentle, even more gentle than necessary. This proves that he knows how to restrain himself, that he is not violent because he never learnt to control himself when one ought to do so, but because he is uncultured, because life, experience, society, constraint from above and from the side failed to teach him to control himself in situations in which every cultured person would do so. He and his ancestors have lived surrounded by other allegedly "violent types", from whom he could learn nothing, and who also knew no moral discipline. The "violent type" is the uncultured type. (Popović 1932:268)

Only a greater culture, understood as a greater inhibition of feelings, can change such a person, claims Popović (ibid., 249). For Norbert Elias, restraining one's feelings was a precondition for the bare survival of an individual in the context of modern life with its social interconnectedness and interdependences; for Bogdan Popović the survival of the nation depended on one's ability to restrain one's feelings and reactions: 'During the Great War I often sought an explanation for a certain antipathy towards our people displayed by some representatives of other peoples, who were otherwise quite good people', continues Popović; they 'sensed in us a constant presence of unrestrained feelings, which impulsively emerge over the smallest dissatisfaction, be it justified or not, and quite disproportionately to the occasion which caused them. The "violent type" has much blame to take in the history of our people' (ibid., 269).

The opposite of the violent, uncultured type Popović called a 'gentleman' – 'the highest expression [...] of all good human characteristics' (ibid., 265), without explaining it in greater detail. It can be safely assumed that if it serves as the counterpart to the unrestrained Dinaric psychological type, a gentleman's main characteristic must be the capacity to control his feelings and their expressions. This is how Slobodan Jovanović (1869-1958), a historian and a professor of constitutional law, Popović's close friend and co-editor of *Srpski književni glasnik*,

interpreted what Popović only pointed to: 'Bogdan understood the gentleman type as it was understood in Queen Victoria's time: as self-discipline'. (Jovanović 2005: 145-46) In one of the last essays he wrote, while living his last years as an exile in London where he had to stay after the Second World War – as the new Yugoslav authorities sentenced him *in absentia* to twenty years in prison and the loss of his civil rights for serving as the President of the Yugoslav government in exile during the war – Jovanović further developed what must have been a frequent topic of discussion between him and his friend Bogdan Popović. He noted that Cvijić analysed the Dinaric psychological type as a simple ethnographic fact, abstaining from judging it either positively or negatively, let alone recommending it as an ethical ideal. However, in the nationalistic atmosphere created by the Balkan wars of 1912-1913, Cvijić's readership simplified his description, stripped it of all negative aspects, and transformed it into a national ideal. Those simplifiers stressed what they liked and deemed politically expedient in Cvijić's description: patriotism, heroic attitude, impulsiveness, unrestrained courage and dynamism. In the years preceding the wars for national liberation, they created a whole ethics on the basis of it, and thus the exact opposite of a gentleman was recommended as a cultural pattern to be followed. However, as Popović before him, Jovanović also noted that courage and unrestrained dynamism of the Dinaric psychological type were not sufficient for the modern world:

Dinaric ideology, its rebelliousness, defiance and contempt of death were good for the heroic time of danger. For the time of difficulties, however, one needs more realism and self-criticism. Serbs will need more national discipline to compete with other ethnic groups. So far it has been difficult to synchronize Dinaric dynamism with any kind of discipline. The Dinaric type is not without courage, but neither is he lacking in self-overestimation and self-promotion, which makes him inflexible and rigid. [...] His patriotism can go as far as total self-sacrifice, but it also has a good measure of envy and narrow-mindedness. There is more strength and momentum than planning and organization in Dinaric enterprises. The examples of personal heroism are legion, but what was achieved is quite disproportionate to the sacrifices made and energy wasted. (ibid., 38-39)

In the modern world, the courage and heroic dynamism of the Dinaric type become an obstacle in the development of a nation, claimed Jovanović. His people needed self-control, restraint, rationality and organization, all of which result from self-discipline and the ability to restrain one's feelings. As Popović before him, Jovanović also recommended the English as the model to be emulated: 'The English are the real masters of their feelings,' wrote Jovanović, 'one is tempted to say that they always calculate what and how deeply they should feel' (ibid., 62). They know how to cope with contradictory feelings, and how to separate the private from the public. 'What Popović saw as [English] goodness should be more appropriately called tameness. Up until the world wars the English lived in peace, freedom and affluence. That has to a significant extent tamed the wild beast which hides within them as much as in any other human being' (ibid., 62). In order to survive in the conditions of complex international competition, Serbs must learn – as the English have – how to become gentlemen.

Among the Serbs who lived in London during the First World War was also a young theology lecturer Nikolaj Velimirović (1880-1956), who would later become a bishop and one of the

most important Serbian intellectuals in the interwar period. During the war Velimirović wrote extensively, lectured at British universities, preached in churches (among others in St. Paul's Cathedral), and in 1919 he was made Doctor of Divinity h.c. at the University of Glasgow. He was certainly the most prominent Serbian Anglophile in the first part of the twentieth century, and there are many testimonies that the sympathy was mutual. Rebecca West mentions him as 'the most remarkable human being [she had] ever met', and 'the supreme magician' (West 1975: 720). 'He spoke arrestingly as if he had just arrived with a message', wrote Stephen Graham about Velimirović in his autobiography, 'he was gentle, persuasive and original, like a page of the Gospel read for the first time'. (Graham 1964: 101-03) The traces of this reputation remain to this day: the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams recently wrote: 'Bishop Nikolai Velimirović was, for several generations of British Anglicans, one of that group of unmistakably moral and spiritual giants who brought something of the depth and challenge of the Orthodox world into the West'. (Heppell 2001: v) Velimirović, on the other hand, claimed that the English were Europe's most civilised people, emphasising the presence of religion in the public life of the United Kingdom. Whenever he was asked to address English workers, he stated that the audience did not want him to talk politics, but to talk about faith. George Lansbury (1859-1940), the editor of the socialist newspaper *The Daily Herald* and Labour leader from 1932 to 1935, told him: 'as far as I know, nothing was ever built on atheism'. Recalling his audience with King George V in 1919, Velimirović mentions the king's remark that he had managed to survive the horrors of the war only thanks to prayer. The grounds for this mutual sympathy seem clear enough. Velimirović was one of those European anti-modernists who worried about the disappearance of faith from hearts and minds, as well as from Europe's public life. In his book *The Spiritual Rebirth of Europe*, published in English in 1920, Velimirović wrote that 'the spirit of religion' is 'the only constructive, the only life-giving agency', and should be 'the guiding spirit of education, in family life, in literature and journalism, in shops, in streets, in towns and villages' (Velimirović 1920: 41). This book was a plea for Christian principles as the basis of cultural and everyday life, and could have counted on very attentive ears in British intellectual life, given the number of influential public figures who advocated the same idea, from Hilaire Belloc in the 1920s, to Douglas Jerrold and T.S. Eliot in the 1930s.<sup>3</sup> The clearest and most concise expression of this idea is found in a lecture given by Velimirović at London's Kings College in 1920:

My thesis is simple and clear. I assert: (1) that Europe has put aside her centre of civilization – which has been the Christian religion for over twelve hundred years – counting that this centre has ceased to be the centre in the eighteenth century – and that she is now tottering on the edge, eagerly grasping, now this, now that, partial agency of human life as her central light and principal guide; and (2) that Europe's day – if all the laws of history do not deceive us – soon will be over unless she returns to the centre, from which all her chief achievements in civilization hitherto have emanated as radiations. (Velimirović 1920: 20)

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<sup>3</sup> Belloc maintained that 'our European structure, built upon the mobile foundation of classical antiquity, was formed through, exists by, and will stand only in the mould of, the Catholic Church. Europe must return to the faith, or she will perish!' (Belloc 1920: 330-31), and that '[i]n the reconversion of our world to the Catholic standpoint lies the only hope for the future' (Belloc 1937: 6). 'We have to return to Christian standards and to the Christian habit of life if Western European civilization is to be saved', claimed Jerrold (1939: 174).

A Christian society similar to the one envisaged by T.S. Eliot in 1939, one could say, instead of a Christian state, envisaged by other contemporary European anti-modernists of the 'throne and altar' variety.

One other young Serbian man spent the First World War in London, also briefly attached to the Serbian Legation: Dimitrije Mitrinović. He was one of the leading members of the Young Bosnia movement, and was before the war closely associated with leading European artists of the time. Although a poet himself, his abilities were obviously better suited for organizational and inspirational work than to pure artistic production. In the years before the war, Mitrinović worked on promoting and interpreting Wassily Kandinsky's ideas in lectures and journal articles, and established a large network of writers and intellectuals – among others, Tomáš Masaryk, Maxim Gorky, Knut Hamsun, Maurice Maeterlinck, Anatole France, Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, Henri Bergson and Franz Oppenheimer – which was to deal with the most pressing problem of the time: the *malaise européen*, and the need for Europe's spiritual rebirth based on the principle of pan-human brotherhood and the cultural unity of the East and the West. The war interrupted his efforts, but as soon as life returned to normal, Mitrinović continued to gather followers and work towards this aim. He was a mystic with considerable personal charisma, who never tired of explaining to his listeners and readers that world history had reached a turning point in which only two outcomes were possible: either humanity will reach its final fulfilment, or the Apocalypse will set in. After the war, Mitrinović decided to remain in London, and quickly found a platform for his prophetic message: A. R. Orage, the editor of *The New Age* offered him an opportunity to write editorials between 1920 and 1921 under the title 'World Affairs', which was the first step in Mitrinović's long march through British public life in the years to come. He then founded the British branch of the International Society for Individual Psychology, securing the blessing of Alfred Adler, but instead of simply promoting Adler's ideas the Society began to turn into a social and political movement with a profile which owed more to Mitrinović than to Adler, and the latter demanded its dissolution in 1933. By that time, Mitrinović had already become a confident spiritual leader who did not need to promote his own ideas under Kandinsky's or Adler's names, and had already established a new initiative: *Eleventh Hour Flying Clubs*, which were to grow into the *New Europe Group*. It had its own journal, *The New Britain Quarterly*, which kept changing names. First it became *The New Atlantis*, then *New Albion*, and finally *New Britain Weekly* in 1933. Under this name, Mitrinović, with his mobile group of faithful followers, founded his most successful initiative: the *New Britannia Movement*, with discussion groups in forty-seven towns in the United Kingdom and an additional thirty groups in London. The intellectual platform for this movement was similar to those which Mitrinović promoted in his editorials in *The New Age* and *New Britain Weekly*: a socialist political programme with some anarchist elements, but it was a lot more than just a political programme. Mitrinović was a spiritual leader, not just a political ideologue, and his aim was to lead his followers to the personal transformation which would eventually result in the transformation of the humanity as a whole. However, such a large movement could not be managed as a small group of followers interested in spiritual transformation, and the membership of the *New Britannia Movement* at the national convention in 1934 demanded that the movement become a political party. Mitrinović, backed by his closest co-founders, opposed this transformation, and the movement soon began to lose popularity, but it does not seem that it worried its founder too much: he preferred to be surrounded by a small group of devoted followers interested in his true aims, than in running a political party. From



the late 1930s until his death in 1953, Mitrinović stopped writing and worked with a group of thirty or forty followers, who could be relied on to understand and transmit his spiritual message.

This message is too complex to be interpreted here, especially because Mitrinović modified it over time and kept including within it new elements which he borrowed from a wide circle of religious and philosophical systems.<sup>4</sup> For our present purposes, it would be enough to say that Mitrinović, as many other European intellectuals at the beginning of the twentieth century, started from the diagnosis of the spiritual crisis of the age, caused by the progressive secularization and the retreat of Christianity which allegedly had been the sole guarantor of Europe's spiritual health – the idea known as 'the centre cannot hold', a semi-verse from Yeats' poem 'The Second Coming'. Mitrinović dreamt of a new Europe, which would lead to a new humanity, and used as the foundation for this dream Hegel's philosophy of history, reshaped by Soloviev's theology and interpreted in psychoanalytical terms. Naturally, this is often difficult to follow, but the most significant features of his plan are clear. Despite all its shortcomings, most obvious in colonialism and the senseless violence of the First World War, Europe must hold the central position in the spiritual rebirth of humanity. Europe is the only continent blessed by willpower, reason and self-consciousness, in addition to the highest level of individuation known to mankind. It must first create a synthesis of all European cultures and form a European Federation, and then proceed to uniting the whole world – not by conquest, but by setting the standards which everybody else would want to follow. How is Europe to achieve this? By being led towards universal harmony by Great Britain, the most reasonable and endowed with the strongest will. 'The British Empire is that Power, both centripetal and centrifugal, which has spread the Aryan presence throughout the world and keeps the world related to Western Europe, [it] is the indication of the utterly evolutionary and supra-historical importance and mission of the giant and the sphinx, Albion.' (Mitrinović, 1987: 125).

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<sup>4</sup> An extended interpretation of Mitrinović's politico-philosophical system can be found in Milutinović, 2011: 172-180.

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